To: CARMEN MOSCA (201) 733-5352

From: FELIX CRUZ

Press Release

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Contact: Lisa Guide
Sam Hollander
(908) 545-4444

Clinton Record on Hispanic Affairs Withstands Nasty Attack in NJ

New Brunswick -- Columba Bush was in New Jersey today, stumping for her father-in-law George Bush and trying to attack the Bill Clinton's record on Hispanic concerns.

Columba Bush said Bill Clinton signed an English Only law in Arkansas. What she didn't say was that the legislation had enough support in the state legislature as to make it veto-proof. She also didn't say that the law contains the following provision: "The English language is adopted as the official language of the State of Arkansas except that this Act shall not prohibit the public schools from performing their duty to provide equal educational opportunity to all children." A Clinton/Gore administration would not support English Only legislation at the national level.

Columba Bush said Bill Clinton will raise taxes on small businesses. This is flat-out wrong. Bill Clinton will raise taxes on the top 2 percent of income earners, those earning more than $200,000 a year. Only 3 percent of America's businesses earn that much. The truth is, Clinton's plan for economic renewal specifically helps small businesses through (a) targeted investment tax incentives, (b) a permanent extension of the R&D tax credit, and (c) a 50 percent exclusion on profits from investments in new businesses held for more than five years.

Bill Clinton believes that small businesses should have the same incentives for economic survival as America's giant corporations.

The fact is, for the past twelve years, Bill Clinton has been attracting jobs to his state and expanding opportunities for Hispanics, while nationwide, Latinos, like most Americans, have been working longer hours for less pay as the result of three successive Republican administrations.

Says NJ State Senator and Congressional Candidate Robert Menendez, "Bill Clinton's plan for economic renewal directly addresses the fundamental issues that Latino organizations like the National Council of La Raza have been pushing for years -- higher-paying jobs, better education, quality affordable health care and safer streets."

The Republicans just don't have that commitment. Look at the facts. Between 1979 and 1989, the proportion of Hispanic workers paid below the poverty line doubled, from 11 percent to 22 percent. Despite having the highest labor force participation rate (78.2 percent), Hispanic males still earn two-thirds less than non-Hispanic males.

Fact: George Bush's failure to create high-paying jobs has only hurt Hispanics further. Almost 75 percent (73.5%) of Latino men are concentrated in service, production and laborer occupations.

Fact: Under George Bush, high school graduation rates and college completion rates for Hispanics are down. Hispanic adults are almost 8 times as likely as non-Hispanics to be illiterate. The "education" president has failed Latino students.

Health care is even worse. After four years of George Bush, more than 30 percent of Hispanics lack access to health care, compared to 13 percent of Whites and 20 percent of Blacks.

With each year of a Bush presidency, the standard of living for Hispanics dropped lower and lower.

"Bill Clinton has been meeting and listening to Hispanics throughout his whole campaign," says Cannon. "He is the only candidate to have addressed the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda and the only candidate with a comprehensive Hispanic voter outreach team, "Adelante Con Clinton."

"The choice is obvious," says Menendez. "After twelve years of trickle-down economics Americans need a change. That change is with Bill Clinton."

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